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10th PLENARY MEETING

30 September 1993
at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: INSANALLY
(Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

EARTHQUAKE IN INDIA

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of all the members of the Assembly, may I extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of India for the tragic loss of life and extensive material damage which have resulted from the earthquake that struck India recently. May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

Mr. ANSARI (India): On behalf of the people and the Government of India, and especially of those affected by the terrible earthquake that hit south-western India on the night of 30 September, I should like to express our profound gratitude and appreciation for the very kind words of sympathy and condolence that you, Sir, expressed on behalf of this body.

The earthquake that hit the region of Sholapur, some 240 miles south-east of Bombay, has brought death and destruction to the lives of thousands of families. The estimated death-toll at the moment is over 6,000, with multitudes of others injured and rendered homeless by the devastation.

Natural disasters know no boundaries. Their wrath and fury do not make a distinction between developed and developing or between the rich and the poor. Such disasters cannot be totally avoided. However, closer cooperation between all members of the international community on the exchange of information would mitigate the consequences of natural disasters. India, for its part, is fully committed to this task.

Your message of condolence, Sir, will bring healing, succor and hope to the grieving multitudes that have been so profoundly affected by the earthquake. It will strengthen their resolve to rebuild their lives.

ADDRESS BY MR. KIRO GLIGOROV, PRESIDENT OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Kiro Gligorov, President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, His Excellency Mr. Kiro Gligorov, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President GLIGOROV: At the outset, it is my pleasure to extend to you, Sir, my sincere felicitations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In discharging your important duties, you can count on the support and cooperation of my delegation. Your wide experience and diplomatic skills are a valuable asset for the success of this important session of the General Assembly.

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ENGLISH

(*spoke in Macedonian. English text furnished by the delegation*)

This is the first time that my country, the Republic of Macedonia, is attending a session of the General Assembly as an independent State committed to making its full contribution to the enhancement of world peace and the promotion of internationalcooperation.

The Republic of Macedonia is a country with foreign policies based on the principles of peace, friendship and cooperation. We see the interdependence of interests and mutual respect as the future of successful international cooperation. An important elemen: of our foreign policy is to promote good-neighbourly relations and to incorporate the principles of the new European architecture in the crisis-ridden region of the Balkans. Such a foreign policy is consistent with the internal development of the Republic of Macedonia, which is oriented towards a market economy, democracy, a State of law, human rights and harmony in inter-ethnic relations.

By attaining its independence in a peaceful and legitimate manner, the Republic of Macedonia has kept the peace and forestalled a spill-over of the war into the southern Balkans. The comprehensive efforts of the past two years have changed our historic position from a bone of contention to a factor for peace and stability in the Balkans. Pursuant to this, the endeavours of the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia in the course of this session will be aimed at strict compliance with the United Nations Charter; support for all measures that enhance international peace and security; the democratization of international relations in all spheres; the advancement of human rights and freedoms to the utmost degree; the promotion and development of a policy of good-neighbourly relations; forestalling the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction; and the enhancement of preventive diplomacy in settling disputes.

The adverse situation of the world today is a source of concern to all of us. We are not fully satisfied with the efforts of our Organization nor especially with the results it has achieved in resolving current sources of tension. We accept the assertion that the world today is not threatened by a new world war and that the use of nuclear arms is not very likely. But the fact remains that the number of serious and potential military conflicts is increasing. The efforts of our Organization to find peaceful solutions have been enormous. Regrettably, the results have not always been productive, owing to a certain extent to the absence of a wider implementation of preventive diplomatic measures and activities.

I take this opportunity to emphasize the extraordinary significance of the historical accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization for peace in the Middle East and the development of world relations. All those who have contributed to its signing deserve our special recognition.

In this context, I am deeply convinced that, despite all difficulties, we will soon be speaking of South Africa as a region of successful development and human dignity. Let us hope that the forces of peace in that region will ultimately prevail over the forces of regression and apartheid.

I must reiterate our deep concern over the perpetuation of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the threat of a spill-over and a wider destabilization of our region. In dead earnest we, a country situated in the immediate vicinity, see this as the threat of an all-out Balkan war. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is extremely grave, tragic and incomprehensible. The most terrible post-cold-war drama is unfolding in the heart of Europe: massive killings, massive destruction, over 2 million refugees, insane acts of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Numerous international conferences and activities have been undertaken in order to bring an end to this war. The Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions. Let us all hope that peace in Bosnia will finally become a reality.

An end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a first and essential step. However, permanent peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina will not be possible without compliance with, and upholding of, the fundamental principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and the principles of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), namely that borders cannot be changed by force; that the international community does not recognize or accept "ethnic cleansing"; and that the rights of minorities must be respected.

Without these preconditions, not only will permanent peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina be impossible, but a precedent will be set which will incite new conflicts. To condone the use of force and military superiority for territorial expansion and redrawn borders would exacerbate other, less heated, tensions, especially in the ethnically mixed Balkans and the countries of Eastern Europe. It

would in fact mean condoning the potential for permanent inter-ethnic wars.

The Republic of Macedonia is vitally interested in seeing an end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, forestalling a spill-over and attaining peace on lasting foundations. For these reasons, and out of concern for our own security and for peace and stability in the region, we have undertaken a number of timely preventive measures in cooperation with the United Nations. In this context, I would like to stress the key role played by Security Council resolution 795 (1992) of December 1992 for the deployment of a contingent from the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the Republic of Macedonia.

The decision of the Security Council, to which the Secretary- General made a great contribution, has proved to be justified, timely and efficient. It has demonstrated the enormous advantages of preventive diplomacy. The peace-keeping forces of the United Nations, strengthened by the United States contingent, are of great importance for our security and for sustaining peace and stability in the region. Our cooperation with these forces is exemplary, and it will remain so in the future. This step has greatly increased the feelings of security and trust in the peace-keeping activities of the United Nations on the part of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

As a country and as a people, our permanent interest lies in peace and cooperation in the Balkans. In the same spirit, our efforts are aimed at establishing good-neighbourly relations with all our neighbours and at resolving all existing problems with our southern neighbour. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the implementation of United Nations sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, and the remains of bloc divisions prevalent until recently prevent the Balkans from functioning on natural regional principles. Economic and cultural ties, communications, the free flow of people, goods and ideas have practically been severed. This is indeed a depressing situation. In order to prepare for the twenty-first century and a Europe of open borders and cooperation, it is essential that the Balkans undergo major changes. This is in the interest of all the peoples and all the countries in this region. Those are the reasons why Macedonia has adopted policies of good-neighbourly relations, peaceful settlement of problems and development of overall economic, political and cultural cooperation among the countries of the Balkans. We are truly convinced that, in the interest of peace and stability, the international community will ardently support these processes in the Balkans. The principles of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the processes within the European Community are the only options for peace, stability and economic revival in the Balkans. However, this also implies that all the Balkan States, which have chosen the European option, must be enabled to achieve gradual integration into the European Community.

We are all dissatisfied with the stagnation of the world economy in the past year, the deterioration of the economic situation in the world, and the economic situation in certain countries and regions. The number of people affected by unemployment, poverty and hunger is on the rise. For developed countries, recovery from the recession has been slower than expected, hindering their increased participation in the development of the developing countries and countries in transition.

Because of this situation, and because of our firm conviction that the period after the cold war must not grow into a period of economic conflicts, we believe that much more can be done to seek a way out of the world's current economic and social difficulties. In this context, I am convinced that the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly will serve as firm encouragement for an increase in world demand and for liberalization of world trade. A very important prerequisite for the realization of this goal is the successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations, encouraged by the Tokyo summit. It is also essential to resolve the issue of arrears and that of access by developing countries and countries in transition to international financial markets. All of these activities support the view that only development generates new development, while stagnation brings only regression and poverty.

Enhanced protection of human rights is justifiably receiving greater priority in the work of our Organization. We are concerned by the fact that in the past year, violations of human rights have reached epidemic proportions. We feel that the Vienna Conference on Human Rights is a very positive step in the right direction, and we hope that the Declaration and Action Programme adopted at that Conference will contribute greatly to ending the unfavourable developments in this area today.

The negotiations in Vienna have clearly shown that current mechanisms for implementing existing human-rights instruments are not efficient, and that much improvement is needed, particularly in the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. A significant step in

this direction has been taken by the adoption last year of the Declaration on minorities. The next steps which our delegation will support are the commencement of operations of the Commission on Human Rights according to the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and an examination of the need for setting up a United Nations high commission for minorities, with headquarters in Geneva.

I would like to point out that all unresolved issues involving ethnic minorities can well lead to future military conflicts, particularly in certain regions of the world, thus endangering international peace. Hence it is essential to take immediate preventive measures in this area as well.

The Republic of Macedonia is a European country in transition, a landlocked country, a country of transit and a developing country. These factors contribute to the economic difficulties of my country. The situation is further complicated by the consequences of the United Nations sanctions imposed on Serbia and Montenegro. I would immediately like to emphasize that we have strictly complied with the implementation of the sanctions. As a result, this year alone, our gross national product has been cut in half. External trade has been reduced considerably, transport costs have increased immensely, and other indirect damage has occurred as well.

Today, the survival, democracy and economic development of the Republic of Macedonia are fundamentally dependent on assistance from the international community. Otherwise, it is very possible that social tensions, and the probable collapse of the economy, will bring about a new crisis spot. I am deeply convinced that, in accordance with Article 50 of the Charter and Security Council resolution 820 (1993), the United Nations and the Security Council will be in a position to provide us with concrete forms of assistance.

It is inconceivable to expect a small country to bear the damage of an international action of this type on its own, without solidarity and timely assistance. Aid should be provided now as a preventive measure, instead of after the outbreak of those likely social clashes which may grow into new conflicts.

In this spirit, the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia at this session will lay out our direct proposals regarding the problem of compensation for damage incurred as a result of implementing the sanctions, the problems deriving from the position of landlocked countries, and other issues related to peace and cooperation.

The strengthening of the United Nations in all aspects, in the post-cold-war period, is of vital importance to the Republic of Macedonia. My country belongs to a group of countries that can survive and develop only in conditions without war, in a world where peace and stability are not threatened, where international cooperation will be conducted without obstacles and discrimination, and a world where everyone will have respect for human dignity.

In this context, the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia will make its full contribution to the successful work of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and to strengthening the Organization.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for the statement he has just made.

President Gligorov of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. EMOMALI RAKHMONOV, CHAIRMAN OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Tajikistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

Chairman RAKHMONOV (Tajikistan) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The year that has elapsed since the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly was noteworthy for the further growth in the authority and the effectiveness of the United Nations. It testifies, in our view, to the deep understanding that the members of the world community have about the need for close, constructive cooperation in the name of a better future. As I look around this Hall, in which, for the first time, a Head of State of a sovereign Tajikistan is speaking, the words of the great poet Saadi come to my mind:

"The sons of Man are but one body
For the Creator made us all from but one beginning".

Now that I find myself here, in the centre for settling the problems of the whole world, I should first of all like to congratulate Mr. Samuel Insanally, the Permanent Representative of Guyana, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. Allow me to express the hope that this session, under your skilful leadership, Mr. President, will achieve tangible, successful results for the good of all mankind. I should also like to draw attention to the excellent work done by Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President of the General Assembly at its last session; Mr. Ganev both energetically and effectively guided the deliberations on complex political problems.

It is with great satisfaction that I greet Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and express to him our sincere gratitude for his tireless efforts to resolve the conflicts in various parts of the world, not excluding my own country.

The Republic of Tajikistan is taking its first steps as a subject of international law. It is with deep satisfaction that I note that we have been granted an equal voice in the commonwealth of nations, and we are aware that this honourable right imposes significant duties on us.

The two years of our independence, in addition to moments that are undoubtedly positive, have also entailed the harsh trials that my patient and peace-loving people are now going through. It is for the historians to study the root causes, the reasons for the situation in Tajikistan today. I think that my job is to point out just one thing: those whom we believe, on the basis of the law in force in the Republic of Tajikistan, to be guilty of unleashing civil war are guilty of grossly violating the very foundations of any modern society, namely the primacy of law.

As in any civil war, in the civil war in Tajikistan there can be no victors. Our urgent task as a nation is to heal, as quickly as possible, the bloody wounds that it has inflicted on our country.

The attention the community of nations is paying Tajikistan is understandable. Nor should we be surprised at the variety of opinions we hear when events in the Republic are being analysed. I should like to shed some necessary light on a number of issues.

Now that we have set out on the path of independent development, we have run up against the enormous political and socio-economic problems of the transitional period.

Our national economy was built up as just one small part of the enormous economic complex of the former USSR, and was basically a provider of raw materials. With the collapse of those economic ties, our Republic has come face to face with many almost insoluble problems. There has been a catastrophic drop in the standard of living, which could hardly fail to lead to an increase in social tension.

The power struggle that developed at the same time and the attempts to seize power illegally, by force and undemocratically, have split society apart and led to a senseless, fratricidal war. The results of this we know: thousands of broken lives, thousands of dead and wounded, refugees and missing. Immeasurable political, social and economic harm has been done to the Republic.

The internal instability has become the main reason for the economic and political chaos, the total legal confusion and the sharp drop in production. The future of our people - the future of Tajik statehood - has been put in jeopardy.

The sixteenth session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Tajikistan, which was held in these conditions, laid fundamentally new foundations for establishing peace and civil harmony in our country. The Supreme Council has decided in favour of solving all political, social and economic problems solely within the framework of the constitution. A number of important laws have been adopted that are designed to afford citizens social protection and to return them to their homes and peace-time jobs.

In accordance with the Constitution, we have elected a leadership for the Supreme Council and formed a Government. Today our society and our people have become aware that the highest power in the State should be the law, and only the law.

As the Head of State, I declare, from this rostrum, that we shall adhere to the fundamental principles of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference and the Paris Charter and other international instruments for the defence of law. We are determined to carry out democratic transformations in our country and to acknowledge and respect philosophical, religious, ideological and political choice as an inalienable right of the individual.

Working under the constant pressure of political and socio-economic problems, we have succeeded in a short time in removing the economic blockade from all the regions of the Republic and have begun rebuilding our destroyed national economy and instituting economic reforms in order gradually to introduce a free market.

From the beginning of the restoration of our Republic, our Parliament has adhered to the principle of the primacy of law, and in so doing has passed a number of measures, while the Presidium of the Supreme Council has laid down three special decrees on amnesty. Does not this show that we are acting to resolve through political means the problems that have accumulated in our country? We are prepared for dialogue with all the social forces in our country to achieve national reconciliation, civil harmony and stability in Tajikistan.

We would like to cooperate constructively with forces of any political orientation acting within the framework of existing law and respecting generally accepted principles of democracy. I would like to inform the world community that Tajikistan is actively working to improve its election laws and to prepare a draft new Constitution in which maximum attention will be given to all problems related to guaranteeing and protecting inalienable human rights.

In terms of settling our domestic political problems, we are seriously concerned over the attempts at regionalization of the internal conflict in Tajikistan, a conflict which is still going on in a number of areas along the Tajik-Afghan border. The outbreak of the conflict this summer brought dozens of deaths.

Allow me briefly to tell the Assembly my view of the essential reasons for the tensions along and inside the border.

Everyone knows that until recently Tajikistan had been systematically subjected to unprovoked acts of armed intervention from the territory of a neighbouring country. Naturally, we understand its internal difficulties related to establishing a centralized State administration. But facts cannot be denied, and we have now been faced with the need seriously to deal with the question of self-defence.

We are not hatching any hostile plan with regard to Afghanistan. The measures which we have taken and are taken to strengthen the defence of our border - which is also a border of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) - do not go beyond what is laid down in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and are fully in keeping with generally accepted norms of international relations.

But this, of course, does not mean that that is the only way to solve the problem. And here we are encouraged by the notable speed-up in the negotiating process with the authorities in Kabul. We have achieved a number of positive agreements on a broad spectrum of questions, including normalizing the situation along the Tajik-Afghan border. We think that a permanent, substantive dialogue with the leadership of the Islamic State of Afghanistan will help us remove some other well-known irritants.

It is most unfortunate that huge resources are still being spent to support destructive elements based on the territory of Afghanistan. Having gone there from Tajikistan, they are, with the help of extremist groups and the forces of international terrorism, hatching plans forcibly to change the State structure in our country. A legitimate question arises: is it not wiser to use these resources to build rather than to destroy?

Another of our problems is that of the Tajik refugees in Afghanistan. There are many versions of how they ended up on the territory of Afghanistan, but that is not the main point, which is that they should return to their homeland as quickly as possible. We express our sincere thanks to the Administration of Afghanistan and to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who are giving serious attention to those people. As of the middle of September, more than 35,000 Tajik refugees - more than half the total - had returned to their permanent homes from Afghanistan. We hope that the process of voluntary return will continue and that with the support of the authorities of Afghanistan and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we shall in the near future be able to put an end once and for all to this painful question.

We have already completed our preparation for signing a trilateral agreement between Tajikistan, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We hope that the agreement will be signed as soon as possible.

From this United Nations rostrum, I should like to say one more thing in this regard. We are firmly convinced that the support of the Administration of Afghanistan in efforts to restore peace to the Afghan land, which has suffered so much, would be in the interests not only of that country but of the region and of the entire world. There was a time when some States spent a great deal of resources on war in Afghanistan. In my view, the time has

come to help restore a peaceful life there. A restless, unstable Afghanistan is a threat - and not only to Tajikistan.

Regarding our participation in the CIS, I must emphasize that Tajikistan is in favour of strengthening the Commonwealth while observing full respect for the sovereignty and independence of its member States. In this context, I should like to point out the significance of two areas of our activities within the framework of the CIS, activities which are critically important for Tajikistan. I am talking about relations with Russia and with the Central Asian States.

Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, has undergone great trials in taking upon itself the maintenance of peace and stability in virtually all the space and territory of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, the peoples of the former Soviet Union, including Tajikistan, commend and welcome the peace-keeping efforts made by Russia.

A positive role in stabilizing the situation in our country has been played by the brotherly support of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Tajikistan also thanks the United States and all the other countries of Europe and Asia that extended the hand of assistance to us during terrible and dark days.

We hope that Tajikistan will quickly be removed from the blacklist of conflict areas. In this respect, we count upon the tangible assistance of the world community in restoring our national economy, which has been destroyed by war and by natural disasters. A country which is rich in natural resources, which has an attraction in terms of its economic prospects, needs purposeful assistance in order to be reborn. Allow me to express the hope that that assistance and that support will naturally, in accordance with generally accepted principles in world practice, be given to my country.

Tajikistan, which has gone through the horrors of a civil war, views with great concern the course of events in the hot spots of our planet. We know of the pain and suffering of the people of Somalia. We feel the full depth and senselessness of the tragedy of the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, the deadlocked events which have taken place in the Caucasus of the post-Soviet era. We also know firsthand how destructive is the force of local conflicts. That is why we make an urgent appeal to the world community to multiply its efforts to end, and to prevent, that type of conflict. We are firmly convinced that the force of arms, no matter how threatening and frightening they may be, cannot solve a single contentious issue.

In this connection, we are seriously concerned by the uncontrolled and unsanctioned trade in arms in areas of intense instability. Essentially, what is happening is a massive arming of entire regions. Indeed, we can imagine how unbelievably difficult it is to take away from a population weapons that they have illegally obtained. On the basis of our own bitter experience, we loudly speak out about the danger of that fateful trend.

Today, this destructive impact on our economy has been joined by another: the aspiration of a number of countries to acquire nuclear weapons or the technology to produce them. As a country which has the technology for mining and initially processing uranium, we categorically oppose the use of that priceless source of energy for non-peaceful purposes.

We state our unconditional support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we hope that the conference of the States parties to that Treaty, scheduled for 1995, will decide to extend it indefinitely.

As the Assembly knows, the end of the cold war and bipolar confrontation gave rise to great hopes on the part of the peoples of the world. Unfortunately, events have not yet justified many of these hopes. None the less, there is one place in the world where notable political events have been observed. We are deeply satisfied with the historic agreements reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Israel on mutual recognition.

We welcome the decision of the United States of America to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization, and we commend that great country for its role in supporting peace and stability on earth.

The questions which the General Assembly will be discussing at its forty-eighth session show that there is now an onward rush towards the interdependence of nations. In Tajikistan we are convinced of this.

We commend the peace-keeping and humanitarian efforts of the United Nations. We are especially proud of Tajikistan's initiative to include institutions of the Commonwealth of Nations in the broad peace-keeping activities on the territory of our country; that initiative has not been ignored.

The mandate for the presence in Tajikistan of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ismat Kittani, has been extended. The Republic has fruitfully worked with the United Nations Observer Mission, the representative of the High Commissioner for Refugees, and the representatives of other international non-governmental organizations.

Our special gratitude goes to the Security Council of the United Nations, which constantly monitors developments in the situation in and around Tajikistan. We sincerely hope that the efforts of the community of nations will be increasingly focused on ensuring the conditions for sustainable development.

We wholeheartedly support the principles and recommendations of Agenda 21. We feel that accomplishing that Agenda's important goals, such as the transfer of technology and resources, will have a favourable impact on disaster areas such as the Aral Sea and areas of great poverty.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Assembly that my people, who have now embarked upon establishing their own statehood and have overcome considerable difficulties in so doing, look to the future with a feeling of great and, I hope, justified optimism.

We will spare no effort, we shall use all our energy, in building a genuinely legal, democratic and enlightened State which will not fail to take a worthy place among the civilized countries of the world.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Tajikistan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Emomali Rhakmonov, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Tajikistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. ISAIAS AFWERKI, PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF ERITREA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the State of Eritrea.

Mr. Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the State of Eritrea, His Excellency Mr. Isaias Afwerki, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President AFWERKI: Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, upon your election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

I feel particularly privileged and honoured to address the General Assembly on behalf of a people that struggled for half a century to regain its fundamental human and national rights and that, despite the outright military victory it won, took the unprecedented step of organizing a free and fair referendum so as to join the community of independent States on the basis of its freely expressed wish and on solid legal grounds.

As I speak here today, I cannot help but remember the appeals we sent year in and out to the General Assembly and the States Members of the United Nations, describing the plight of our people and asking for legitimate sympathy, support and recognition. We appealed to the United Nations not only in its capacity as a representative of the international community, but also because of its special responsibility to Eritrea. For it was the United Nations that decided in 1950, at the beginning of the cold war, to deny the colonized people of Eritrea their right to self-determination, thereby sacrificing their national and human rights on the altar of the strategic interests of the super-Powers.

In adopting that resolution, the United Nations affirmed that it remained an international instrument which the General Assembly could be seized of at any time. But for the next 41 years, as a brutal war of aggression was conducted against the Eritrean people, initially with the active support of the United States and later with a much worse and massive involvement of the Soviet Union, and despite the repeated appeals of the Eritrean people, the United Nations refused to raise its voice in the defence of a people whose future it had unjustly decided and whom it had pledged to protect. Not once in 41 years did Eritrea, scene of the longest war in Africa, and victim of some of the grossest violations of human rights, figure in the agenda of the United Nations.

This deafening silence pained our people. It also gave a free hand to the aggressors, thereby prolonging our suffering and increasing the sacrifices we had to make.

But it neither shook our resolve nor undermined our belief in the justness of our cause and the inevitability of our victory. As an Eritrean proverb says: "The rod of truth may become thinner but it cannot be broken." Indeed, justice has finally prevailed. This is a source of hope and happiness not only for the Eritrean people, but for all those who cherish justice and peace.

While we rejoice at the peace and freedom that have been attained and the promising prospects that lie ahead, we are confronted with the reality of a devastated country and population. The extent of the physical and economic destruction visited on our country, in terms of infrastructure, industry, agriculture, education and health services, as well as the more painful human losses - the death of over 150,000 people, the exile of a quarter of the population, massive displacement, and over 100,000 disabled and orphaned - are appalling by any standard, especially when measured against the meagre resources and small size of our population.

Formidable as our problems are, we are confident that we can and will rebuild our devastated country and provide a decent life for ourselves. It is our firm conviction that outside assistance, no matter how generous, cannot of itself solve our problems. Ultimately, deliverance will depend on our own efforts, on the mobilization and efficient utilization of our resources. But as we start to clear the rubble and pick up the pieces after three decades of war and destruction, we find that our resources are too limited for the awesome task of rehabilitation and jump-starting our economy. We cannot help but ask: Will the United Nations and the international community come to our assistance this time or will our pleas once again go unheeded?

At this critical juncture of its history, Eritrea needs and deserves international support and assistance, not only because the United Nations and the international community bear special responsibility for Eritrea, but also because it is a test case for the United Nations "Agenda for Peace" and the whole concept of peace-building. Eritrea has not only secured peace and stability; it has made the rare achievement of establishing warm relations of cooperation with its former enemy, Ethiopia. And it is tackling the task of reconstruction with popular support and participation, with commitment and determination, with sound and flexible policies, with prudent and efficient utilization of limited resources, and with a demonstrated readiness to promote regional understanding and cooperation.

Unfortunately, the response of the United Nations and the international community so far has not been encouraging. Though the active involvement of the United Nations in the referendum was generally commendable, United Nations contributions to the Eritrean referendum - one of the most successful electoral processes in which the United Nations has ever been involved - was less than $2 million, a meagre sum compared to the tens of millions of dollars devoted to similar exercises, many of which were dismal failures. Similarly, the response of the international community to the programme for the repatriation of half a million Eritrean refugees from the Sudan fell far short of reasonable expectations, and the Government has found no alternative but to start the programme regardless of funds and expected problems. Eritrea has also embarked on a crucial demobilization programme - it has demobilized close to one third of its 90,000-man army in the first phase - without United Nations or other contribution. It had to cut back some of its rehabilitation and development projects and borrow money to finance this first phase.

In our efforts at mobilizing international resources, we have repeatedly been met with such excuses as "a lack of funds", "competing demands", "more pressing priorities" and "donor fatigue". There well may be some truth in all of this. And we are appreciative of the constraints and commendable efforts of some donors. But, I believe, we cannot and should not hesitate to acknowledge that, by and large, the international aid programme is deeply flawed, unfair, unjust and ill-structured to respond to the vital needs of recipient communities. Assistance and the amounts of assistance appear to be decided, not on the basis of need or the capacity to put the assistance to good use, but - even after the proclamation of the end of the cold war - on the basis of the interests and agendas of donors. Moreover, the international community tends to be more responsive to putting out fires than to preventing them, and once the fires are put out it often turns its back on the smouldering combustible remains.

One of the most disquieting features of the present international situation is the marginalization of the entire continent of Africa. Every indicator shows that Africa is sliding back and being left behind, which results in intolerable poverty, suffering and desperation for millions of its people. There is no denying that the onus of the responsibility for these problems falls first and foremost on us Africans. But, I believe, the international community must squarely face the fact that it also bears responsibility for Africa's plight. Many of the dictators who have sown so much havoc and suffering were in fact brought to power

and sustained during the years of the cold war by sections of the international community. Perhaps more significant is the fact that the now discredited economic policies and failed projects were generally designed and approved by international donors and implemented under the direction of an army of foreign experts and advisers.

In our present highly interlinked world, Africa's marginalization, the poverty and desperation of its people, of its youth, cannot be walled in within the continent's boundaries. They are bound to threaten global prosperity and stability. The frustration and resentment that continue to swell and may well explode must be defused in time. Once again Africa must seize its own destiny. Its people and leaders must tap deep into their human and material resources and come up with the wisdom, strategy and commitment to lift Africa from the mire. But as they set out on this difficult road the international community needs to come to their assistance, not with hand-outs that only increase dependency, not with the familiar packages and projects that have gone down the drain, not with preconceived formulas and attitudes of "We know what is best", but in a spirit of partnership dedicated to helping Africa to stand on its own feet and contribute to the enrichment of human life and the protection of the environment.

Of course, not everything in Africa has been bleak. Just as gross human failure is not limited to Africa - witness events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Soviet Union and elsewhere - Africa has its share of positive and uplifting developments and successes. We are following with much interest the determined and promising efforts of several African countries, both at the individual country level and within a regional context. Despite the neglect and inequities of the international community, many African peoples are making a determined assault on poverty and social injustice. In our part of the continent, Eritrea and Ethiopia have already started mutually beneficial economic cooperation, and, together with the other countries of the Horn, are working to set up a regional mechanism to foster peace and cooperation. We strongly believe all of the many positive developments in Africa should be duly recognized.

In view of the positive developments in the Horn of Africa, the tragedy that has gripped Somalia has been profoundly disturbing. As the bloodletting among our Somali brothers assumed harrowing proportions, and at a time when many were hesitating, we strongly advocated the constructive intervention of the international community, under the umbrella of the United Nations, to save lives and help extricate Somalia from the destruction it was heading for. Despite our opposition in principle to external military intervention, we realized early on that the extraordinary situation in Somalia demanded extraordinary measures.

It was therefore with great relief that we welcomed the decision of the United States Administration to intervene in Somalia. Encouraged, we sought - individually and in conjunction with our regional partners - to ensure that the intervention would be guided by clear and comprehensive security, and humanitarian and political objectives. And we did not hesitate to share our views on the size, type and length of stay of the intervention force needed for the success of the mission. But unfortunately our views were not heeded, although we were, and still are, better placed to understand and work in the realities of neighbouring Somalia.

Be that as it may, we recognize and appreciate the achievements of the international intervention in Somalia. The improvement of the humanitarian situation and the March 1993 Addis Ababa Accords on national reconciliation are major steps forward. At the same time, the worsening security situation in Mogadishu and the increasing toll in human lives, including women and children, have cast a long shadow on the intervention in Somalia. Repeated mistakes in handling the situation have led some people openly to call for an immediate end to the intervention.

It is our conviction that a precipitate withdrawal of United States troops - which we strongly warned against from the beginning - would not only signal a lack of United States commitment to the intervention, but would eventually make the position of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) untenable. This would plunge Somalia into a catastrophe much worse than the anarchy that prompted the intervention in the first place. We therefore urge the United States and the international community at large to stay the course in Somalia and to shoulder their responsibility to the Somali people in the hour of their greatest need. We also urge them to review, frankly and dispassionately, the intervention to date, build on the successes and achievements and, more importantly, admit and correct mistakes.

We sincerely believe that the countries of the region, whose role has so far been deliberately or otherwise neglected, can make a constructive contribution to the international effort. Consulting them informally every

once in a while, as has been the case in the past, is clearly not enough. They need to become part of the process in a more meaningful and formalized way, as it concerns and affects them directly and more than anyone outside the region.

The advent of the new State of Eritrea happily coincided with the end of the cold war, that era of super-Power rivalry that caused so much human misery and led to the virtual paralysis of the United Nations. Like the rest of humanity, we place much hope on the new era, on the prospects of an enhanced role for the United Nations, a role that would make it truly representative of "We, the peoples of the world". And yet we have no illusions that a new, just and equitable world order has dawned. We see too many old habits and practices - inside the United Nations and outside it - to entertain any illusions. Although we hope for successes, we see that the failures of United Nations initiatives far outnumber any of its successes. Injustice endures within nations and between nations.

We are awed by the challenges that continue to face humanity and are deeply aware of our minuscule capabilities. Still, Eritrea is determined to make its own small contribution to the betterment of human life in its own corner of the world.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the State of Eritrea for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MR. RAFIC HARIRI, PRIME MINISTER OF LEBANON

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lebanon.

Mr. Rafic Hariri, Prime Minister of Lebanon, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Rafic Hariri, and I now invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. HARIRI (Lebanon) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It gives me pleasure to start out by congratulating you on your election as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its forty-eighth session. I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev, for his able stewardship of the previous session of the Assembly.

Also, I should like to set on record our appreciation for the outstanding efforts of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to attain the goals of the United Nations and to fulfil the growing responsibilities entrusted to the world body in behalf of world peace. We do note that the changes sweeping across the world today impose upon the United Nations additional responsibilities which the President, Government and people of Lebanon view with hope and optimism. Therefore, we are all called upon to provide the United Nations with the necessary means for fulfilling its expanding mandates. By the same token, the United Nations should for its part streamline its operations in order to adapt to the demands of the future.

I take this opportunity to welcome the Member States which have recently been admitted to the membership of the United Nations. This is yet another indication of the universality of this Organization and a confirmation of the growing need for it.

As the current decade brings us closer to the end of another century in the history of mankind, we now have a clearer picture of the issues and concerns that dominate the thinking of the peoples of the world. In dealing with the spectrum of these questions, we need to rely first and foremost on rational thinking. The wealth of experience drawn from the lessons learned from the numerous conflicts that have taken place throughout this century has taught us that the path of peace is, in the final analysis, the optimal course to follow, as all other avenues have proven futile. The era of a divided world based on blocs and polarization, which severely strained international relations and precipitated crises for many decades, is now over. Therefore, the world is now ready to develop a universal vision of mankind based on a universal code of ethics and set of human rights. The United Nations Organization, which has long suffered from rivalries that paralysed it and placed severe constraints on its potential, is increasingly called upon, in an unprecedented fashion, to engage in peace-keeping activities. Despite the fact that its current

operations are somewhat different from the conventional functions originally envisioned for the Organization, its operations demonstrate the growing need for this world body to lend confidence and credibility to the multinational effort in dealing with challenges and conflicts in a fair and sound manner.

We believe that understanding between States and peoples hinges upon the preservation of democracy and human rights. Such understanding would in turn contribute significantly to the elimination of regional and global disputes, in keeping with a major principle set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. Here, I would be remiss if I did not recall Lebanon's contribution to the drafting of the Charter as well as of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for Lebanon was a member of the Special Committee entrusted with the drafting of both instruments.

Lebanon's well-known tradition of firm commitment to the principles of democracy, freedom and human rights, and its success in upholding those principles despite the dangers that threatened it for many years, remains faithful to the basic pillars upon which our pluralistic, open and creative society rests. Lebanon, which has withstood the trying years of its plight, is now facing its critical challenges with the vigour of renewed and consolidated national unity. It has incorporated those principles into the fabric of its identity. Thus, the new constitution proclaims that Lebanon is

> "Arab in identity and affiliation, a founder and active member of the League of Arab States, fully committed to its covenants; and a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization, fully committed to its Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The State is an embodiment of all these principles, in all areas and spheres wherever they apply, without exception."

In view of its singular experience, Lebanon deserves your support and a pledge from the world community not only to provide material assistance and help in the reconstruction of what the civil war has destroyed, but to bolster the Lebanese system. The need for the example set by this system is all the more urgent in our world today, given the many ethnic and religious conflicts currently raging in various regions.

Lebanon, with its time-honoured tradition of coexistence, moderation and tolerance emanating from these lofty human values, can indeed be a living example to those even in advanced societies who are searching for a successful formula for social harmony. This is especially true now that Lebanon has put its tragedy behind it and embarked on a course of accord and concord.

The great majority of the Lebanese lived through the years of war and bore the brunt of its devastation without having any real belief in bellicosity or its causes. Throughout the war, some one million students continued to attend their schools and colleges as if to express, through pursuit of education, their rejection of war. The same majority continued to discharge its duties towards society and the State in many parts of the country. Even ordinary civilian crimes did not rise noticeably during the war.

All this confirms that the Lebanese, who settled this problem a long time ago, not only in texts and precedents, but also in their daily routines and life-styles, are proud to be able to present to the world, after their long suffering, a true example fashioned from first-hand experience of the resilience of human nature with its wealth of intellect and vivid diversity.

In our common interest we must all seek to safeguard such a legacy and protect it from violence. This is particularly true in the case of the Middle East region, which has traditionally and historically suffered from the interference of foreign powers and the struggles of interest and conflict that transcended national frontiers, and even the entire region, to pose a threat to world peace in its entirety.

Given the magnitude and intensity of the conflicts that have ravaged Lebanon soil, the survival of our country proves that the Lebanese nation is too strong to be eliminated and that it has long-established traditions that will stand the test of time. The people of Lebanon has demonstrated great stamina and resilience in the face of overwhelming odds.

Lebanon is committed to realizing its aspirations and determined to achieve progress within the context of the opportunities offered by the modern world. If the armed conflicts and hostilities of recent decades have drained many of our resources, our potential and our capabilities must henceforth be channelled to face up to and overcome the common challenges that confront mankind everywhere.

To this end, the Lebanese Government is striving to restore Lebanon to its special position in the community of civilized nations. The emphasis is on achievements that will make the Lebanese individual capable of facing the

future. Lebanon considers that its major loss, perhaps, has been the migration of many of its most talented and highly skilled young people. One of our major concerns now is to create favourable conditions that will attract them back. It is our hope that our human resources will be highly instrumental in expediting the reconstruction of the better society we all aspire to see: a society that enjoys peace, democracy and prosperity.

Lebanon, whose people suffered enormous hardship during the dark years of war, fully recognizes and appreciates the various tragedies and pains that afflict some parts of the world today. As we reaffirm our permanent commitment to peace and to the Charter of the United Nations, and to the tenets that emanate from them, we stress our adherence to and respect for an integrated system of values which includes human rights, freedom and dignity. Indeed, this should be the ultimate goal of every undertaking and endeavour.

Early on, the United Nations took cognizance of the situation in Lebanon, as attested to by the many resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the Lebanese crisis. Some people may not be aware that between 1968 and 1993 more than 80 United Nations resolutions and statements on Lebanon were adopted. This is a large number of resolutions in comparison with other crises. Lebanon has an imposing file indeed with both the General Assembly and the Security Council. If the sheer volume of United Nations official records on Lebanon is compared with that of the documents submitted to ordinary courts of law, it will become clear instantly that, on the scales of international justice, the weight of evidence tips the scales in favour of Lebanon. Justice and law have been, and continue to be, on the side of Lebanon. Notwithstanding, the Lebanese have always been deeply disappointed by the fact that political interests have continued to outweigh justice and the rule of law, and led to the application of double standards regardless of the scores of resolutions that have been adopted right here in the United Nations in support of the legitimate demands of Lebanon, a country that sought effective recourse from the United Nations.

All those United Nations resolutions have called for ending violence in Lebanon and for respecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and thus have reaffirmed the country's political independence and national sovereignty. Therefore, we must give credit to the Organization for its initial favourable response in regard to Lebanon, especially in terms of the need to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and the establishment of the United Nations peace-keeping force in southern Lebanon. I avail myself of this opportunity to recognize the effective role played by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). May I pay tribute to the many United Nations personnel who have made sacrifices, including the loss of life, in the line of duty in southern Lebanon. To those contingents and to the friendly countries that have contributed troops, we express our deep gratitude.

However, as we look forward to the future - having taken firm and crucial steps towards restoring normalcy, with the substantial and effective help of Syria in disarming the militias, ending the internecine fighting and restoring the authority of the State, we feel we have the right to call upon the United Nations at a time when its role is being redefined in consonance with current global changes, to act decisively in Lebanon. More specifically, we expect the United Nations to work forcefully for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and to ensure Israel's total withdrawal to the internationally recognized boundaries. It is not an overstatement to point out that peace in Lebanon has been, and continues to be, the *sine qua non* for stability in the Middle East and for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the entire region. Any peace arrangements will remain fragile and incomplete should the international community choose to tolerate the continuation of a situation that threatens Lebanon with potentially explosive disputes.

The Lebanese have agreed by consensus on a new formula for national reconciliation, which was worked out in 1989 at Taif in Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia played the principal role in working out that formula, which later became Lebanon's constitution. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia, in keeping with a long-standing tradition, together with other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council continues to donate substantial assistance towards the reconstruction of Lebanon. With the same goal in mind, the Lebanese Government undertook the implementation of a rehabilitation programme in all spheres of life and in an unmistakable atmosphere of international confidence. Gradually, Lebanon began to restore its traditional, regional and international role. This permitted Lebanese energies to be unleashed, and gave rise to creative initiatives for reconstructing and developing the country.

In all this, Lebanon has faced up to occupation and violence, by adopting a stance anchored in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our country, which draws its strength

from the steadfastness and resilience of its people, has reaffirmed time and again its right to live in dignity and to ensure the freedom of its territory. The Lebanese Government is heavily engaged in the reconstruction effort and the enhancement of civilian life in order to promote stability throughout the region.

Israeli acts of aggression, which have clear objectives and purposes, have been met by the Lebanese with a high sense of responsibility, solidarity and internal unity. Our unchanging, spontaneous response is insistence on peace and on securing the security and progress of our country, which has paid dearly for having been used as an arena to settle accounts among conflicting parties.

An insistence on peace was the driving force that prompted the Lebanese to return immediately to their villages and farms following the most recent Israeli aggression. They pitched tents in front of their demolished homes, thus demonstrating their deep attachment to the land and their loyalty to the territory and its bounties.

The true nature of the Al-Khiyam detention camp, where Israeli military authorities hold more than 200 Lebanese citizens without any legal grounds, is well known to United Nations officials and to Member States. Indeed, the case of those detainees is common knowledge in the international media. Moreover, 100 other Lebanese prisoners are being held in various prisons inside Israel. Despite the repeated appeals by the Commission on Human Rights and Amnesty International and the demands made by the Lebanese Government and human-rights societies in Lebanon and the rest of the Arab world, the Israeli authorities refuse to release them. Furthermore, for more than eight years Israel has denied the International Committee of the Red Cross as well as family members access to visit those prisoners.

It is high time indeed for Israel to respond to the appeals of international bodies by releasing those hostages promptly, thus putting an end to their drawn out suffering and the agony of their families. In fact, Israel is duty-bound to do so in compliance with the relevant international treaties and conventions.

The positive developments now taking place daily in Lebanon are the most articulate expression of the Lebanese refusal to permit their country once again to be a victim of the Middle East conflict at a time when the winds of peace are starting to blow towards the region. Lebanon yearns for peace and has consistently opted for peace throughout its history. In fact, Lebanon can thrive only in an atmosphere of peace and stability. Indeed, its role in its own region and in the world at large cannot be performed in the midst of violence and war. Lebanon believes that the Middle East region, if it enjoys a just and comprehensive peace, will be in a position to contribute incalculable services to mankind. All the peoples of the region, including the Lebanese, have enormous potential, backed by a great cultural heritage and diverse capabilities. Energies and resources that have long been squandered on war could then be harnessed in the service of social and economic development as we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century with all its promise of achievements to come.

Against this backdrop, and in view of the regional and international developments that have made it possible to initiate negotiations with Israel, Lebanon participated in those negotiations two years ago despite the fact that parts of its territory have been under occupation as a result of an act of aggression committed by Israel in 1978 - and not because of a state of war with Israel. Lebanon's just case firmly rests on a series of United Nations resolutions adopted over the past 15 years, all of which demand Israel's withdrawal and define the necessary means and modalities required to achieve it.

If Israel uses the security of its northern border as a pretext, we would argue that all the measures taken by Israel, including the occupation of territory, have contributed to the disruption of security. In fact, Lebanon and the international community are more than ever convinced that the only way to ensure regional security is to end the occupation of Lebanese territory and desisting from tampering with the security and safety of its population.

Forty-five years of unabated disputes, conflicts and wars have created certain outlooks. Changing such outlooks will require great political courage and deep understanding on the part of those who are interested in peace. Large-scale direct support will also be needed, along with innovative thinking to shake ourselves loose from traditional frames of mind.

More than ever before, the Middle East sorely needs brave, innovative approaches if it is to attain a firm and lasting peace. Lebanon, which is participating in the peace talks in order to liberate its lands and lay the foundations of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, wishes to point out the following:

First, Lebanon demands the total withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Lebanese territories under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). The Lebanese armed forces will assume full responsibility for security in the southern and western regions should Israel implement the provisions of those two resolutions.

Secondly, Lebanon, which believes in and seeks peace, would be among the first beneficiaries of a just peace as it expands to encompass the entire region. Along with its Arab brethren, Lebanon will be an active participant in making peace and in supporting its development and advocating its consolidation as the underpinning of life in the Middle East.

Thirdly, Lebanon which has had very painful experiences as a result of the policy of the singling out of certain countries and imposing partial solutions, believes that peace is indivisible, especially in cases where issues are closely interrelated, as is the case in the Middle East. We also believe that unilateral and partial arrangements are bound to give rise to nothing but new disputes and conflicts.

In this context, I should like to affirm, on the basis of the object-lessons learnt from our common experience, that there can be no firm and lasting peace in the Middle East without Lebanon and Syria. The accord reached between Israel and the Palestinians will remain a mere single step unless it is quickly complemented by substantive solutions on the other Arab tracks. Lebanon, which is extremely limited in the size of its territory, has a delicate population composition and scant economic resources, cannot provide a solution for Palestinians who have been uprooted from their land. The responsibility for returning the Palestinians to their homeland and for finding a satisfactory solution to their status remains within the competence of the international community. If we really wish to put an end once for all to the chapters of pain and anguish in the Middle East, then the cause of the Palestinians should be addressed in such a manner that may ensure for them a decent life commensurate with their legitimate aspirations and the aspirations of all our countries after human rights.

Fourthly, in order to achieve peace, Lebanon is willing to cooperate fully with the two co-sponsors of the peace conference, particularly the United States of America, to reach a comprehensive and just solution that would safeguard the right of all parties to permanent peace, and put an end once and for all to conflicts in the region. Towards that end, Lebanon stands ready to assume its due share of the responsibility.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lebanon for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Rafic Hariri, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lebanon, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. ANDREATTA (Italy): I would like to express our warmest congratulations to Guyana and to you personally, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

I am also pleased that in the past year the United Nations family has grown to include the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Andorra, Monaco and Eritrea. We wish to extend a special welcome to the last two in view of our long-standing historic and human ties.

Italy, deeply committed to European political and economic unity, shares the views expressed by the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is the current Chairman of the European Council.

We are not simply voicing conventional wisdom if we stress the depth of the transformations that define the times in which we live. Every day brings forth new proof that the end of the cold war has brought us to a watershed. We must carefully decipher the lessons and courageously shoulder the new tasks with which this moment has presented us.

As the Secretary-General said in Milan, international law is the main instrument at our disposal; it is not merely a regulatory instrument but the very language of the relations between States. But the social pressures we are now facing are profoundly new, generating changes that international law must begin to reflect as it translates new needs into new institutions.

If today we believe we can govern this transformation, and if we refuse to yield to the disorderly growth of a new international order, we have first and foremost the renewed vitality and prominence of the United Nations to thank.

The United Nations has evolved on the foundation of practices that are solidly inscribed in the Charter, while discovering new ways to pursue its aims. Take peace-keeping, a practice from the United Nations earliest days that has recently acquired a special role. Today peace is more likely to be threatened by the explosion of internal

conflicts (though at times with transnational components) than by acts of open aggression across international borders. Peace-keeping, peace-enforcement, and humanitarian relief missions all take place in the midst of conflicts with complex political causes, and tangled ethnic and national roots. In such an environment, the traditional juxtaposition of diplomacy and military action no longer corresponds to the reality of the present, and a broad initial mandate is not sufficient concretely to define operations in the field.

The unity of military command is an unquestionable principle, without which no operation can succeed. However, the political management of an operation cannot be confined strictly to military options, especially when the real issue is not the legitimacy of the use of force (which may be clearly authorized by the Security Council's mandate), but its advisability and timing in view of the political objectives. I would add that in situations involving crowds of civilians, we must consider making it our policy always to give pride of place to the use of non-lethal anti-riot equipment. This is not only an Italian concern. Spokesmen for other countries have also stressed that countries contributing troops to United Nations peace-keeping missions need mechanisms that would exempt their troops from passively abiding by orders that may be illegal, inconsistent, or in contradiction with the aims of the operation.

The United Nations peace-keeping practices reveal an awareness of the need for adequate prior consultation of troop-contributing countries. To this end, while Article 29 of the Charter provides a general guideline for the establishment of bodies subsidiary to the Security Council, Article 44 could provide a more fitting solution to the problem. It provides for the Security Council to establish consultative procedures with non-members of the Security Council that have been requested to contribute troops to peace-keeping and security operations. Today, even in the absence of formal agreements such as those provided for by Article 43, I believe we should extend Article 44, by analogy, to operations conducted under Chapter VII of the Charter.

In his "An Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General defined peace-building as laying the necessary political and socio-economic foundations for a lasting peace after the phase of open conflict has ended. The reconstruction - or the establishment - of legal and economic institutions in critical areas and countries represents the main prerequisite of an enduring peace.

These premises form the basis of what Italy means to propose in order to move beyond the current situation in Somalia - a situation characterized somewhat by giving pride of place to the military aspect of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and by the standstill in the political process. We believe that it is essential that the United Nations step up its political efforts at peacemaking by appointing a personality of great international prestige to renew the political and diplomatic initiative with all the Somali factions. At the same time, the mechanisms of the Addis Ababa Conference should be reactivated in such a way as to increase the involvement of the African nations and their institutions in the normalization of Somalia. But the predominantly political nature of our operation to restore hope in Somalia must also be translated into the progressive reconstruction of Somalia's basic economic and social structures and the reorganization of a government and its administrative structures. This requires broad development programmes, to which Italy's commitment has remained unswerving even in the most difficult moments.

Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Italy welcomes the renewed central role of the United Nations, and at the same time supports a reform of its institutional mechanisms.

Let us first consider the possibility of a change in the membership of the Security Council. As Italy emphasized to the Secretary-General last June, since the Security Council is moving towards a future of greater burdens and responsibilities, its representativeness and effectiveness must develop in parallel. What we suggest is that, in addition to the permanent members with veto power and the non-permanent members, a third category be established. It would be made up of countries able to make a special contribution to achieving the objectives of the United Nations. What matters is not drawing up controversial lists, but identifying objective criteria for selection, based on economic factors, human resources, culture, and mass communications. These countries would rotate two at a time, thereby becoming semi-permanent members of the Council.

We must all recognize the renewed central role of the United Nations in international relations, but avoid interpreting this role in exclusive terms.

The regional dimension of multilateralism, which is described in Chapter VIII of the Charter, has today a great

role. Take the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which has been explicitly defined as a regional institution on the basis of the United Nations Charter. Italy is about to assume the chairmanship of the CSCE. We believe that it is being called on to play an increasing role, mainly in preventive diplomacy but also in peace-keeping and in fostering negotiated settlements. In this regional framework, we would welcome more stringent regulations on arms transfers that build on the present United Nations provisions.

If it is true that without peace there can be neither development nor satisfaction of social needs, it is also true that conflict is fed everywhere not only by the urge to subjugate the adversary violently but also by the existence of social injustice, imbalance and poverty.

The first and basic injustice is the violation of human rights. When the international community defends human rights, it is pursuing absolute and autonomous values that must be protected. At the same time, it is eradicating many of the causes of violence between groups and nations.

We hope that an agreement between the groups will finally make it possible to end the fighting in Bosnia. However, as the international community prepares to support the implementation of an agreement, we must not forget the war crimes and the crimes against humanity committed during this tragic conflict. Thus, we applaud the establishment of the International Tribunal and hope that - impartial and free from political influences - it will begin its work at the earliest possible date. Where appropriate, the Tribunal should hand down tough sentences, although I take exception to the death sentence, which Italy firmly opposes on the basis of its time-honoured juridical traditions.

I wonder if the international community could not summon the same determination to establish an international criminal court to prosecute the most serious human rights violations.

Italy is convinced that human rights prosper in systems based on democracy and an open-market economy. That is why we firmly support Governments that are committed to such goals and work courageously through hardships and temporary crises.

An issue of great contemporary relevance is the protection of minorities - which cannot be separated from the protection of individuals, for the two issues are based on the same hopes, the same principles of freedom and the same respect for cultural, religious and philosophical differences. Too often, the territorial integrity of the State has been contrasted with the rights of minorities. Instead, we must demonstrate that in a democracy, a democracy that leaves room for direct participation and for true pluralism of identity and choice, it is possible to balance these two equally worthy values. We must demonstrate that there is no contradiction between the protection of minorities and the stability of borders. On the contrary, as the experience of my country shows, they can reinforce each other.

The principles, institutions and rights that make peace more solid are a primary consideration. But we must never underestimate the often-decisive role played by weapons. The accumulation and development of weapons endangers stability since the perception of a threat triggers actions that are harmful for peace and economically ruinous.

That is why disarmament and non-proliferation, even in the post-cold-war era, must remain one of our main objectives and why we highly value the message delivered from this podium by the President of the United States.

We need to complete past disarmament initiatives that we have agreed to and begun, and both confirm and expand existing tools. We strongly support the early ratification of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START II). The Non-Proliferation Treaty must be strictly observed, which is why North Korea's unclear attitude towards that Treaty is a matter of such great concern. That Treaty must also be strengthened and made universal. In 1995, we should all join together to renew the Treaty unconditionally and for an indefinite period.

Today we are witnessing the emergence of a collective consciousness, the expansion of a shared system of values, an international citizenship based on common, objective interests and the spread of more uniform lifestyles. An Italian philosopher, Giambattista Vico, wrote:

> "Ultimately, once the cities got to know each other, having shared dealings in war, alliances and trade, they came, to an unprecedented extent, to the recognition of natural civic rights as a natural right of all peoples, that is of all united nations - as if the world were one large city - which is the law of humankind."

That was written in the early eighteenth century.

Faced with a world beset by multiple conflicts, in which individual nations or groups often pursue their interests through the use of force, it would be intellectually dishonest and morally reprehensible to adopt attitudes of resignation or fatalism. Violence is no more natural than peaceful coexistence and collaboration between peoples and groups. Acting against violence and for coexistence is therefore not only morally desirable, but actually practicable.

One such possibility has been eloquently demonstrated in recent days by the hopeful development of a peaceful future in the Middle East thanks to the courage of the Israelis, the Palestinians and the Arab countries. As a Mediterranean country with a long tradition of active involvement in the cause of stability and peace in the area, Italy is ready to contribute further to help the entire region take the first steps on a long and complex journey toward peace and cooperation, with borders permanently defined in accordance with Security Council resolutions. The same possibility is confirmed by the promising steps being taken towards democracy and coexistence in South Africa.

The awareness of the possibility and the moral duty to act must also inspire our attitude towards the economic and social problems that dehumanize the lives of millions of people all over the world. I am referring to development policies, which should be conducted in a spirit of solidarity and on the basis of multilateral coordination. Such coordination must also be extended to bilateral initiatives, while we also need closer cooperation between agencies. That approach has already produced successful results in Mozambique and Eritrea, and even in war-torn Somalia. It must now be applied to endorse the peace process in the Middle East. The donors' conference about to open in Washington will provide an important occasion to translate our political support into action.

We know the limits of our actions, and we cannot allow ourselves to be swayed by the temptations of noble but abstract Utopias. It is our responsibility to draw up principles and instruments that are valid for the times in which we live and that can help us to manage and to transform in a more rational and humane way the reality that surrounds us.

Each country must promote this action on its own or through alliances or other groups. But it is ultimately here, in the framework of this Organization and in view of its universal aims and membership, that each country will have to contribute to the solution of these problems. To do this, we must not limit ourselves to declaring principles but, rather, on the basis of those principles we must be willing to hand the United Nations the tools it needs. The international community - in other words, we as Member States - is giving the United Nations greater and greater responsibilities. But the responsibilities of the United Nations are our responsibilities. The problems of the United Nations are our problems.

Mr. JESZENSZKY (Hungary): Allow me to express my warmest congratulations to Ambassador Insanally, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. I should also like to welcome into our midst Andorra, the Czech Republic, Eritrea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Monaco and Slovakia, whose recent admissions have brought the United Nations even closer to becoming truly universal.

During the last year, the international community continued to face extremely grave challenges. This period has seen, along with certain positive achievements, more alarming failures and disappointments. The questions to which we have to respond take us back once again to the basic problem of multilateralism, that is to say, to defining in our complex world the values that can ensure a cohesion which is necessary for our common will to be translated into joint action.

The fall of communist dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe and the end of super-Power confrontation have brought about an international political climate in which new approaches can be found in the maintenance of international peace and security and the resolution of global problems. They are based on greater opportunities for closer interaction and the participation of each and every United Nations Member State in managing and influencing the course of events. These opportunities and the ability of the international community to turn them into tangible results are manifest in the conflict-resolution processes in Central America and South-East Asia, in the resolute reversal of brutal aggression in the Gulf, in the fundamental transformation we are witnessing in South Africa and in the historic agreement in the Middle East. These evolutions clearly demonstrate that with political courage, far-sightedness and readiness for compromise, even the most intractable problems can be untangled and resolved. They show us an example that ought to be emulated in all regions of the world.

The convulsions of the new era of world history are strongly felt in a country like Hungary which, as it has so often in its history, finds itself again close to conflict-ridden areas. Despite the difficulties that inevitably

accompany the historic transition processes of the region, the Hungarian Government, ever since it took office in 1990, has been striving consistently and successfully to maintain the country's internal stability and to ensure that it remains a mainstay of stability in our troubled region. Stability should be omnipresent and universal, and we have to find the appropriate ways and means to achieve it.

As regards the old continent, Hungary wants to see democracy, prosperity, security and the institutions, such as the Council of Europe, the European Community and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that lie at its foundation, gradually expand eastward.

For some time now the world has been living in the shadow of events that ominously remind us of the darkest periods in the history of mankind. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia has been raging for more than two years. But most regrettably, not even the worst cases of disregard for the norms of international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter, not even the gravest crimes against humanity and the most brutal mass violations of fundamental human and minority rights, have proven to be sufficient to persuade the world, when there was still time, to counter aggression promptly and effectively, to prevent the acquisition of territory by use of force and to take a firm stand against the abhorrent policy of "ethnic cleansing".

The end result of such policies of passivity, appeasement and complacency, of the striking lack of an ability to learn from past experiences and of the absence of the necessary political will to act, is well documented right here, in this building, in a shocking and soul-stirring photo exhibition about the horrors of war in the former Yugoslavia. It brings home a painful awareness of the practical consequences of unbridled extreme nationalism and the compelling message not to relax and relent in our national, regional and international efforts to uphold in an uncompromising manner the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The renewal of Central and Eastern Europe and the economic and social processes there have thrown to the surface tendencies of political and ethnic fundamentalism which, having been elevated to the level of official State policy, have unleashed or could lead to conflicts threatening the security of the whole of Europe. In our interdependent world, every nation on Earth, irrespective of where it is situated, should realize the danger of this venomous contagion if it were allowed to spread across our planet.

The people and the Government of Hungary continue to follow the developments of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia with utmost concern. As a country immediately adjacent to the crisis area, Hungary has sought to avoid being dragged into this conflict, while continuing at the same time to voice its principled position on the crisis and abiding by the relevant decisions of the international community.

One has to reckon with the fact that this crisis is not limited to the war-torn areas of Bosnia and Croatia. It festers in Serbia proper, where there is growing pressure on the different ethnic communities inhabiting the country, including the Hungarian community in Vojvodina. In this formerly autonomous province, the successive waves of intimidation and discrimination have already significantly reduced both the size and the proportion of the Hungarian minority. There continues to be a constant threat of a further massive influx of refugees into Hungary, I am afraid. In the conditions prevailing in Serbia and Montenegro, just as in other parts of the former Yugoslavia, it is of utmost importance to seek adequate international protection for these ethnic communities and national minorities. Indeed, one of the key issues in settling the crisis is to ensure their rights without any discrimination, whether they have majority or minority status, with the same norms and standards applying to each and every one of them.

Because of its geographical situation, Hungary finds itself confronted with special economic problems arising from the implementation of sanctions imposed by the Security Council against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Our economic and financial losses directly attributable to the effects of implementing the sanctions are constantly growing, and have now reached $1 billion. We highly appreciate the steps taken so far by the Security Council *vis-à-vis* those countries that have suffered economic losses and have made use of their right to consult the Security Council under Article 50 of the Charter. We trust that the international organizations and institutions concerned will find early solutions to help alleviate those pressing problems. It is clear from the experience gained in connection with the various sanctions regimes in place that attention from the international community commensurate with the scale of the problems caused to third countries is required in order to examine how best we can establish an effective mechanism for the implementation of Article 50. Without such a mechanism, the burden placed on an ever-growing number of countries fulfilling their

international obligations will remain disproportionately and unjustly heavy.

In this connection, it is totally unacceptable to take retaliatory measures in response to actions by any State in fulfilment of its obligations under the Charter. Therefore, illegal measures such as attempts to block free and safe navigation on the Danube river, which is an international waterway vital for many countries of Europe, warrant international action, and the States concerned rightly expect the international organizations to provide effective assistance in this matter.

In the light of recent bitter experiences, we have become more acutely aware that the world cannot be made a safer place unless there are international organizations able and willing to take resolute and timely action. Multilateral diplomacy must be at its best if it is to offer remedies where other possibilities for preventing or settling conflicts have been exhausted. We consider it especially important that the various tools of preventive diplomacy and crisis management should be constantly at the disposal of the international community.

Hungary is highly interested in the ongoing work aimed at a comprehensive review and enhancement of the United Nations peace-keeping, peacemaking and peace-building activities. Many substantive proposals have been made and useful observations put forward in this regard. We hope that they will assist in our endeavours to carry out genuine and purpose-oriented reform measures in the world Organization. We expect that the present session of the General Assembly will move us ahead in the debate on how to bring certain provisions of the Charter into line with the changing realities of our world. Conditions seem ripe today for giving most serious consideration to questions relating to the review of the Charter. The fundamental aim of such a review is to make the United Nations function better. At the same time, it should in no way undermine the effectiveness of the decision-making processes at the United Nations. In this context, Hungary fully understands the pressing financial situation of the world Organization and, as its contribution to redressing this state of affairs, has, as of this year, eliminated all its arrears to the regular budget.

In our view, there are, *inter alia*, two particular areas where a review of the provisions of the Charter is needed. First, there is a long-overdue need for a review of those Charter provisions that imply a distinction between United Nations Member States on the basis of their status of signatory or enemy State. On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the United Nations, the elimination of this obsolete distinction would be more than a gesture towards a number of countries that have, over the years, fully proved their commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. Secondly, the role played in today's world politics by some States and their contribution to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter justify their more intimate involvement in the maintenance of international peace and security. We are aware that the issue of the enlargement of the permanent membership of the Security Council will be the subject of further discussions. However, we believe that two countries - Germany and Japan - already qualify to play the enhanced role that would stem from permanent membership in the Security Council.

My Government continues to believe that the United Nations provides a most fitting framework for translating into reality our global responsibility for the international protection of human rights. It is our deep conviction that the Security Council should pay appropriate attention, and act resolutely and promptly, as part of its preventive actions, to mass infringements of human and minority rights, since they constitute threats to regional and international peace and security.

We should pursue an effective integration of human rights elements into the workings of the whole United Nations system. Hungary supports the early establishment of a post of high commissioner for human rights. An appropriate mandate from this session of the General Assembly could ensure, through this new institution, an adequate presence for human rights elements, particularly in the various fields of early warning, conflict management, peace-keeping and peace-making, electoral assistance and post-conflict peace-building. The high commissioner could make the human rights activities of the United Nations more transparent to world public opinion. We intend to lend our full support to a mandate for the high commissioner that would also cover the protection and promotion of minority rights. In our view, the high commissioner could also play a major role in raising public awareness of the positive models of multinational coexistence and minority protection systems that are functioning well in various democratic countries of the world. Here I can refer to the previous speaker, whose country, I believe, is a good example of this. We believe that this task is of major importance and has never been higher on the agenda than it is today. The application or adaptation of these successful solutions to the specific circumstances prevailing in other parts of the world could

greatly contribute to a more satisfactory human rights situation in our world at the end of this turbulent century.

I have obviously not exhausted all the problems besetting the world. Our Governments today have an enormous responsibility to find answers to the new challenges. If we fail to act now, we risk losing all the achievements won with the ending of the cold war.

Mr. ASAMOAH (Ghana): It is with pleasure that, on behalf of the Ghana delegation, I convey to Mr. Insanally of Guyana our congratulations on his election, by acclamation, as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. He assumes this high office at a momentous time in the history of mankind, as we endeavour to establish a new world order based on freedom and justice. The skills and experience that he brings to his office assure us of success during his tenure. The cordial relations that happily exist between the President's country and mine increase our satisfaction, hopes and expectations. We pledge to him and to the Bureau our full cooperation and support.

Let me place on record also our appreciation of the effective leadership that the President's predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, gave to our Organization during his stewardship. His ability to navigate the General Assembly through the turbulence of a contradictory context in international relations was admirable.

Once again, the Secretary-General has shown, through a display of his remarkable skills as a thinker, an administrator and an accomplished diplomat, that he is on top of his job. The credit is no doubt shared by the staff, whose dedication and commitment have been maintained.

The universality of the General Assembly, which makes it the most representative organ of the Organization, has again been reaffirmed with the admission of five new Member States since August 1992. We take this opportunity to welcome them and to extend to them the cooperation of the Ghana delegation.

The search for enduring peace is still the greatest challenge of the Organization, in spite of the end of the cold war. The collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the accession to independence of its constituent parts, the freedom and independence of the countries of Eastern Europe, German reunification, and the cold-war relics of trouble spots have brought to the fore

> "Simmering disputes, violent conflicts, aggression and foreign occupation, interference in the internal affairs of States, policies of hegemony and domination, ethnic strife, religious intolerance, new forms of racism and narrowly conceived nationalism", *(A/47/675, annex, para. 3)*

as the Jakarta Message of 1992 of the Non-Aligned Movement so aptly stated.

At the same time, our world is faced with an economic and a social situation similar to that which preceded the two world wars. All these developments, aggravated by global recession, threaten to undermine the purposes of the United Nations.

We must continue to pursue the goal of total disarmament. We should like the proposed United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include nations' production of arms and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The goal of complete and total disarmament would obviously be easier to pursue in an environment of peace based on mutual confidence. It is in this context that we welcome the efforts of the United Nations to shoulder the increasing burden of peace-keeping and peacemaking. In Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa, the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, the Middle East, Cyprus, and elsewhere, the efforts of the United Nations have served as a positive check on the threat to international peace and security. There are, however, lessons to be drawn for current and future operations. The holding of elections in Angola and in Cambodia without the fulfilment of certain conditions, such as the disarming and cantonment of troops, was tactically unhelpful, in spite of the circumstances that led to the elections - a mistake which, thankfully, the United Nations does not intend to repeat in Mozambique. We should also remind ourselves that peacemaking may be a slow and painful process. The need to retain the confidence of all parties and their support for, and participation in, the process is fundamental and crucial to the success of such operations.

We are disappointed at the instability that continues to engulf the former Yugoslavia. Whilst we still regret the initial reaction of the international community - in particular, the regional institutions - to developments there, we wish to reiterate that unrestrained nationalism that seeks justification in the much-cherished principle of self-determination is unacceptable. Furthermore, the expression of such nationalism in "ethnic cleansing" is as barbaric and

revolting as it is reprehensible and totally at variance with civilized behaviour. The readiness of the United Nations to act decisively in Somalia contrasts sharply with the timidity and hesitation that have marked our presence in the former Yugoslavia and threaten to erode the credibility of the Organization. It is for these reasons that we welcome Security Council resolution 859 (1993), in which the Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, calls for the immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostilities throughout the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina that are essential if a just and equitable political solution to the conflict is to be achieved through peaceful negotiations. We expect the Security Council to monitor the implementation of the resolution.

My Government warmly welcomes the historic agreements on limited autonomy for Palestine and on mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. These accords are a tribute to the courage, foresight, determination and outstanding statesmanship of Chairman Yasser Arafat and of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. They usher in the beginning of the end of decades of war, mistrust, violence, destruction and wanton killing and suffering that the Arab-Israeli conflict has brought to the people of the Middle East. They lay a solid foundation for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. We therefore urge the entire international community to support them.

From the new dawn of relations in the Middle East emerges a powerful, compelling and inspiring truth - that there is no conflict that is not capable of solution. That is why we consider that the "no war, no peace" situation in Cyprus should not be permitted to lure this Organization into complacency. The search for a settlement should be accelerated. To this end, the recent decision to maintain the United Nations presence in Cyprus should encourage all the parties involved.

The situation in Sudan, equally, cries out for a peaceful solution and for greater United Nations involvement as a contribution to the search for an enduring settlement to an essentially political problem that has brought such suffering to the people and has created an unbearable refugee problem for neighbouring States.

Our Organization has recorded laudable success in its implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) on the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The independence of Namibia is the latest of the success stories of decolonization. However, the Territories and peoples that remain under colonial rule demand our active and sustained attention and render premature any conclusion that the decolonization process has been completed.

We welcome the progress that has been made in the negotiations in South Africa. However, the international community needs to remind itself that apartheid is far from being completely eradicated. The process of democratization in that country must be completed so that all its citizens may be enabled to exercise their voting rights. The world community has a responsibility to maintain its vigilance regarding South Africa until the election on 27 April 1994, which will put in place an acceptable constitutional programme for a transitional Government based, for the first time in the history of that country, on universal adult suffrage.

Of equal concern is the impasse over Western Sahara. The United Nations peace plan must be allowed to work, and the timetable set for the holding of elections must be respected by all. In the light of the call for a more prudent use of the resources available to the United Nations, it is imperative that the task of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) be completed rapidly, to the full satisfaction of all concerned, particularly the Sahraoui people.

The new impetus for peacemaking and peace-keeping represents a major advance in our collective engagement in the task of seeking and creating a peaceful and safe world. In this Assembly it has been suggested that the United Nations should limit its commitments, that it should not take on every conflict. But which conflicts must it address, and which ones should it decline to get involved in? That is the crucial question. The unity of the purposes of the Charter and the universality of our Organization compel us to recognize that a threat to peace anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere.

But even if the suggestions have merit, either on the grounds of lack of funds, constraints in logistics or the United Nations inability to heal all the world's wounds, my delegation wants to stress the need for the United Nations to see all the peace-keeping assignments it is engaged in through to their logical conclusion. The United Nations cannot, at this juncture, turn its back on South Africa, Liberia, Rwanda, Angola, Mozambique, Haiti, Somalia or the former Yugoslavia. It would be a sad day indeed if all these laudable initiatives were abandoned on the grounds of well-reasoned arguments pleading lack of funds or of the will to help these nations enjoy the peace that has eluded them for years.

In recognition of the fact that the United Nations cannot undertake too many initiatives, it should devise mechanisms for shoring up regional efforts at conflict resolution, such as in Liberia. We also wish to stress that the internal parties to the various conflicts which the United Nations is striving so hard to resolve have a moral responsibility to play their part in accelerating the process towards peace. Human decency and the sanctity of human life impose this duty on them. In this respect, we must encourage the Inkatha Freedom Party and other right-wing groups to join the process of negotiations in South Africa, and we should condemn in no uncertain terms the treachery of UNITA and the attitude of some of the Somali warlords.

Whatever mistakes the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) may have made, it is grotesque for any Somali leader to seek to be a hero by engaging the United Nations in combat. Such a show of ingratitude may have long-term damaging consequences in terms of the willingness of Member States to undertake humanitarian missions. And what would be the consequences for the Somali people should the United Nations decide to abort UNOSOM? Any leader who has the interest of his people at heart needs to reflect on that.

It is noteworthy that many of the conflicts plaguing us are in the developing countries. We hope the call for limiting the peace-keeping role of the United Nations is not an attempt to shirk the burden of engaging in solving the political problems in these countries in the same way as the fundamental economic concerns of these countries have been marginalized.

As we concern ourselves with the resolution of these sometimes malignant conflicts, let us not forget to address the fundamental factors that generate many of them. We know that a great proportion of these problems can be traced to economic deprivation and underdevelopment. My delegation has stressed time and again in this Assembly and elsewhere that underdevelopment and conflicts have a link. It is often the poorest countries or countries where economic decline has been steep that relapse into savage violence. We have also said that the source of the condition of underdevelopment can be largely traced to a global economic system that has been inimical to the interests of developing and poor countries.

It is time the United Nations, in its effort to construct peace and keep the peace, addressed some of the fundamental economic issues that hamper all efforts to eradicate global poverty. In this connection, the perennial problems that plague the economies of the South must now be fully tackled as part of the energetic search for world peace. We have said in almost all United Nations forums, including the Assembly, that the debt burden cripples our economies. We have spoken regularly about the unacceptable levels of resource flow from the poor nations to the rich. We have drawn regular attention to the unequal terms of trade, protectionist barriers and a disastrous global pricing system that does not pay us adequately for the fruits of our labour, whether we produce coffee, cocoa or copper.

It is time the United Nations placed development and the crucial need for restructuring the world economy on its priority list side-by-side with, if not above, its peace-keeping and peacemaking agenda. The United Nations must defend each nation's right to earn its way by being an equal participant in the global market place. Many of us have undertaken structural adjustments. Yet the returns of the great sacrifices we have made remain low. So many of us cannot provide adequate social services in the form of schools, clinics or clean water for our people. In many instances, bowing to the conditions set for the loans we contract to expand our export base, we have to lay off workers and thus consign thousands or even millions of families to indigence as the small pay check that puts a meal on the table, buys medicine when the child is sick, or provides the uniform for the new school-goer in the family, is no longer forthcoming.

The United Nations has been advised, correctly in our view, to run efficient peace-keeping operations, to refurbish itself administratively and to upgrade its skills in all the spheres of its endeavours. We wish to add that the United Nations must now also place upon its active agenda the question of development and tackle it with the seriousness it deserves. We have striven in this Organization to link the environment, human rights, democracy and humanitarian relief with development. It is time we realized that peace-keeping and peacemaking can be carried out efficiently, and the problems that generate conflicts can be resolved, only if we promote the issue of development with vigour. And this can be done if the United Nations insists on a more just, equitable and transparent world economic system that will confer the means for development on all nations. The task of eradicating global poverty must receive the same attention, concentration and energetic action as are given to peace-keeping and peacemaking.

The democratization process, which is part of the effort to promote and uphold human rights, should not be

limited to the national level. The full implementation of the principles of democracy within the family of nations should also be one of our central concerns. It is in this context that we seek the revitalization of the General Assembly, where the sovereign equality of Member States finds full expression. We look forward to the General Assembly's playing its full role in the maintenance of international peace and security as required by the Charter. We also welcome the initiative of the Security Council to make its work, including its decision-making process, more transparent. Such transparency will obviously enhance the legitimacy of its decisions and, equally importantly, reflect the fact that it is the Members of the Organization which, under Article 24, confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that in discharging its functions the Security Council acts on their behalf.

My delegation sees no need to go over the case, which has already been well established, for the reform of the Security Council. Suffice it to say that, whatever the final form of a restructured Security Council, it is clear that its reform should be based on the principle of the sovereign equality of Member States and the clear recognition that the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the Organization and should reflect the universality of our Organization. The Ghana delegation is ready to participate in the search for a more legitimate and effective Security Council.

We welcome the commitment made by President Clinton to ensure the payment of contributions due from the United States in respect of peace-keeping operations. It is to be hoped that in the years to come the United States, which pays a substantial portion of the United Nations budget, regular and peace-keeping, will continue to abide by this commitment and also address the question of outstanding contributions to the regular budget.

It is the hope of Ghana that this session will mark the beginning of the renaissance of the United Nations, ready to collectively commit itself to the pursuit of the objectives of our Organization as reflected in the principles and purposes of the Charter.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.